

REMARKS

In the Office Action dated October 21, 2003, in response to Applicants' arguments, the Examiner withdrew her rejection of claims 1-6 and 14 under 35 U.S.C. 102(b), and claims 7-13 and 15 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 112, Second Paragraph

In the Office Action dated October 21, 2003, the Examiner rejected claims 1-19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112 second paragraph, as failing to point out and distinctly claim the subject matter of the invention. The Examiner stated that the term "laboratory" recited in claims 1-3 is vague because it is unclear what the term actually encompasses. Applicants have amended claims 1-3 and deleted the term "laboratory", and respectfully request the Examiner's rejection be withdrawn.

Rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner maintained her rejection of claims 16-19 as being unpatentable over Sessa et al. (J. Chromatog. 382(1986) 258-263) in view of Zuk et al. U.S. patent 4,281,061. While Applicants do not agree that the combination of references renders claims 16-19 unpatentable, Applicants have cancelled claims 16-19 and

therefore the rejection should properly be withdrawn as moot. Pending claims 1-15 are now properly in condition for allowance.

Request for Interview

Applicant respectfully requests either a telephonic or an in-person interview should there be any remaining issues.

Applicants respectfully request entry of this amendment. If there are any questions, the Examiner is invited to call the attorney at 202-638-6666.

Respectfully submitted,
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